



For those assessors and deputies who are OU or OSU football fans: Wait ‘til next year!! I too was heartbroken by both of our bowl games. I am an avid OU fan but I support OSU too. These young men and their coaches worked very hard—but sometimes it’s just not your day. We should still support both programs and remember to enjoy the victories each team had during the season.

I know you all join me in congratulating our 3 retiring assessors and thank them for their many years of service: Bill Schultz of Grant County, Sharon Butler of Seminole County and Cheri Hall of Payne County. We hope they enjoy each day of retirement! Between the three of them there was almost 70 years of public service. We welcome their successors and will recognize them in February at the CODA breakout session.

On January 5th, during that lovely snow and ice storm, CODA and ACCO had a Legislative Orientation for our new legislators. Because of the weather, some did not attend. Gail Hedgcoth and I were able to be there and were able to get information about county government to some new people—and I think it was very worthwhile. We will deliver the same material to the others at their offices at the Capital during CODA in February. If you have a new legislator and haven’t introduced yourself yet, please do so. And please don’t forget to stay in touch with your returning Senators and Representatives.

I am enjoying attending the CODA and CGLC meetings—it is a much shorter drive for me than it was for Debbie Collins. Most of the talk this time of year focuses on legislation of course. We will have information about that in February at CODA from Jim Kelley and from the Tax Commission. Jim and the Legislative Committee do a great job representing our interests at the Capital. It is a very time consuming job and I know we all appreciate their efforts.

I hope to see you all at CODA February 8-10!

Sincerely, *Denise Heavner*

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Ad Valorem Update

Happy New Year from the Ad Valorem Division.

Hope that January ice is gone in your area and the memory of the Bowl Games faded in time for your city visits. This is a busy time of year. I remember visiting all the smaller cities and towns in Oklahoma County during some pretty icy January cold snaps. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate this year. But I do think that city/town visits are usually a good positive experience for the county assessor, their staff and taxpayers.

I attended the CODA Board meeting this last week. I was impressed with the CODA Board's planning efforts for the CODA meeting in February at the Oklahoma City Marriott. It should be a good meeting and it's nice to try a new location for the meeting. CODA President Kathi Mask has been working hard on the program and so we expect a good session as the historic 2005 legislative session kicks off.

Many of you may remember Robert "Bud" Scribner, a long-time IAAO instructor. He passed away last week after a short illness. He taught a number of courses in Oklahoma and was an excellent instructor at several Ad Valorem Division Annual Educational Conferences. Bud possessed some style and grace. He had the guts to get up in front of 3,000 people at the last IAAO Conference and propose to his fiancée, a Georgia assessor. She accepted but, unfortunately, they were to have been married sometime this summer.

Our first Rules hearing on the new Veteran's Exemption went well. Thanks to President Denise Heavner and Todd Mathes for attending the hearing in the midst of some pretty tough weather. Remember that the Veteran's Exemption will not take effect until 2006. We're expecting the Oklahoma Department of Veterans Affairs to mail out eligibility letters in late fall 2005.

Glenn Blood reports that the Windows version of the State Computer System has stabilized. Many counties are also using the CAMA system for personal property as well as using laptops in the field to take personal property renditions. This should save a lot of work as well as providing good service to taxpayers. As we move forward into 2005, we're also looking forward to the continued good working relations with the State Auditor and Inspector (SA&I) and Center for Local Government Technology (CLGT), Cooperative Extension, the County Assessors' Association, and the Oklahoma Association of Tax Representatives (OATR). A good solid relationship between these groups helps everyone in the ad valorem system and provides better service for state taxpayers.

Thanks to everyone.
And Happy New Year.

Jeff Spelman, CAE Director Ad Valorem Division

Reporter's Welcome

January is rolling right along and, as some of you read this, February is right around the corner. Most assessor's offices are knee-deep in homestead filings and those of us "lucky" enough to still have household personal property, are filing renditions as quick as our little hands will let us.

I want to encourage those of you who are going to CODA next month to say "Hi" to our three new county assessors. Steve Spleth is taking over for Bill Schultz in Grant County following Bill's retirement last month. Meanwhile, Jacquie Rose and B.J. Parks have moved up to the position of county assessor after serving as deputies under Cheri Hall and Sharon Butler in Payne and Seminole County, respectively. Let's please make these three feel welcome at our meeting February 9th. Remember when we all had to "cut our teeth" as new assessors?...

I want to either thank Wade Patterson or strangle him for introducing "billboard valuation" into our vocabularies last August. Since then, I have been besieged with questions, concerns, and general apprehension regarding the valuation of billboards in Washington County. What I thought was going to be both a fun endeavor and a good way to bring much-needed tax dollars into the county coffers has turned into an on-going effort to place value on a tangible piece of personal property more suited for the real property side of our new software's valuation engine. The lesson I have learned through it all is this: Before you jump in and start a project, make sure your ducks (or in this case, valuation tables) are all in a row. Know what I mean?

Thanks to those who responded to my request for updated information in last month's edition of the Assessment Files. Remember, the information we pass along to the rest of you is only as good as the information we have in hand. I have a fairly-recent list of birthdays for our county assessors on file, but if any of you "new guys" want to send me the date (not the year, unless you just want to) of your birthday, I will add it to my saved list. OK?

See you in a few weeks...

Your Reporter,
Todd Mathes



February Birthdays

Janie Bellah (Washita)	Feb 5
Sharon Lane (Delaware)	Feb 9
Karen Perkins (Ellis)	Feb 14
Joy Anderson (Pottawatomie)	Feb 14
Nancy Hill (Atoka)	Feb 18
Cynthia Holtwick (Creek)	Feb 22
Glenda Kirk (Roger Mills)	Feb 26
Linda Jordan (Latimer)	Feb 28



CODA NEWS

The CODA (County Officers and Deputies Association) Mid-Winter Conference will be held February 8th – 10th in Oklahoma City at the Marriott located at 3233 NW Expressway. Most of the blocked off rooms were taken early so a few nearby hotels have offered to serve as “overflow” lodging for those not able to book a room at the Marriott. Hopefully, most of you have made your hotel reservations by now and, hopefully, we’re not all too spread out along Northwest Expressway.

As for the actual CODA conference, Tuesday (Feb 8th) begins with registration starting at 9 a.m. and the opening general session getting underway at 1:30 p.m. Speakers for the general session will include Attorney General Drew Edmondson, State Auditor Jeff McMahan and CLGC lobbyist Dave Herbert, among others. The main entertainment of the evening is the always popular Bingo at 8 o’clock.

Wednesday’s highlights include legislative coffee and a scheduled trip to the State Capitol, followed by individual association meetings at 1:30 p.m. A reception for all invited state legislators will be held at 7 p.m., followed by a dance with *Miss Behavin’* at 8 o’clock. Some of you may know her...

Thursday will wrap up the conference with a little pep talk from motivational speaker Ronda Mikles at 9:30 a.m.